Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1 – 3: Canceled

Claim 4 (Currently amended) A method of reducing the effects of neuroendocrine-mediated, psychologically ~~mediated~~ induced stress on the skin of a human or animal which method comprises administering to the individual a composition capable of inhibiting glucocorticoid-induced chronic stress in a dermal cell or a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses, said method including the step of preparing the composition by incorporating therein, a first substance selected from the group consisting of ~~ginseng~~ ginsenoside Rb1~~Rbl~~, ~~ginseng~~ ginsenoside Rc, curcumin, 22-OH-cholesterol, ciglitazone, mevinolin, commipheric acid, okadaic acid, liquorice extract and mixtures thereof; and a second substance selected from the group consisting of wolfberry extract, shiitake extract, activin, ginseng Rbl, ginseng Rc, curcumin, ciglitazone, commipheric acid, boswellia extract and mixtures thereof, provided that said first substance and second substance are different.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 4 wherein the composition is administered orally.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 4 wherein the composition is administered orally.

Claim 7 (Previously presented) A method according to claim 4 wherein the composition is in the form of a nutritional supplement or a cosmetic composition.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn) A method for identifying a compound capable of reducing the effects of psychologically-mediated stress on the skin of a human or animal, which method comprises:

(i) contacting a dermal cell or a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses with a candidate compound in the presence of a glucocorticoid receptor agonist under conditions and for a period of time that would, in the absence of the candidate compound, lead to the cell being chronically stressed;

(ii) subjecting the cell to acute stress;

(iii) analysing one or more cellular markers selected from a marker of inflammatory cell recruitment, where the cell is a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses, a marker of matrix degradation, where the cell is a dermal cell and/or a marker of matrix synthesis in the cell, where the cell is a dermal cell; and

(iv) determining whether the candidate compound affects the status of the one or more cellular markers.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 8 wherein step (iv) comprises comparing the status of said markers in the presence of the candidate compound with the status of said markers in the absence of the candidate compound.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 8 wherein the marker of inflammatory cell recruitment is the level of expression of ICAM-1.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 8 wherein the marker of matrix degradation is the level of expression of MMP-1 and/or MMP-9.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 8 wherein the marker of matrix synthesis is the level of expression of procollagen-1.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn) A method according to any claim 8 wherein the acute stress is oxidative stress.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 8 wherein the period of time in step (i) is at least 4 days.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn) A method of producing a composition for reducing the effects of psychologically-mediated stress on the skin of a human or animal which method comprises

(i) contacting a dermal cell or a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses with a candidate compound in the presence of a glucocorticoid receptor agonist under

conditions and for a period of time that would, in the absence of the candidate compound, lead to the cell being chronically stressed;

(ii) subjecting the cell to acute stress;

(iii) analysing one or more cellular markers selected from a marker of inflammatory cell recruitment, where the cell is a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses; a marker of matrix degradation, where the cell is a dermal cell; and/or a marker of matrix synthesis in the cell, where the cell is a dermal cell;

(iv) determining whether the candidate compound affects the status of the one or more cellular markers;

(v) selecting a candidate compound identified in (iv) as affecting the status of the one or more cellular markers; and

(vi) admixing said compound with a cosmetically or pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

Claim 16 (New): A method according to claim 4 wherein the composition is capable of inhibiting both glucocorticoid-induced chronic stress in a dermal cell and glucocorticoid-induced chronic stress in a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses.

Claim 17 (New): A method according to claim 4 wherein a combination of the first and second substance inhibits glucocorticoid-induced chronic stress in a dermal cell or glucocorticoid-induced chronic stress in a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses as measured by an in vitro assay comprising the following steps:

(i) contacting a dermal cell or a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses with the composition in the presence of a glucocorticoid receptor agonist under conditions and for

a period of time that would, in the absence of the candidate first and second substance, lead to the cell being chronically stressed;

(ii) subjecting the cell to acute stress;

(iii) analysing one or more cellular markers selected from a marker of inflammatory cell recruitment, where the cell is a cell involved in skin inflammatory responses; a marker of matrix degradation, where the cell is a dermal cell; and/or a marker of matrix synthesis in the cell, where the cell is a dermal cell;

(iv) determining whether the composition affects the status of the one or more cellular markers;

(v) selecting a composition identified in (iv) as affecting the status of the one or more cellular markers; and

(vi) admixing said compound with a cosmetically or pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.